



News Release

Communications New Brunswick

N.B. Human Rights Commission

March 21 is International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (07/03/19)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) - The following is a statement by Gordon L. Porter, chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

"March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It was proclaimed by the United Nations in 1966.

"This date has a special significance this year, as 2007 is the 200th anniversary of Britain's abolition of the slave trade. Slavery itself remained legal in New Brunswick until 1834, when it was abolished throughout the British Empire.

"Clearly, racism and the struggle against racism have had a long history in our province. To illustrate this, I need only mention the people of the First Nations who for so many years were systematically denied most of their rights. The laws that discriminated against Aboriginal people survived well into the 20th century.

"Even by the early 1950s, racism and racial discrimination remained commonplace, and even socially acceptable, in New Brunswick. For example, black people were not allowed to enter the Admiral Beatty Hotel in Saint John by the front door. It took a courageous black woman, Mrs. Lena O'Ree, to confront and overturn this policy.

"It was mainly to counter racism that the Human Rights Commission was created in 1967, and racism was the commission's main focus throughout its early years. Last year, race discrimination complaints amounted to about five per cent of the complaints that we received.

"The commission has a role to play to ensure that New Brunswick is a welcoming place for immigrants. Last June, we commended McCain Foods Limited and the Multicultural Association of Carleton County for their exceptional work in welcoming people of all cultures to Carleton County.

"We should all be grateful to the multicultural groups who have been doing tremendous work to help immigrants to settle in our province, and to the countless people who have worked to ensure the rights that we enjoy today.

"On March 21, I invite New Brunswickers to celebrate the contributions of people of all races and ethnic

backgrounds, and to commit to oppose racism in all its forms."

07/03/19

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